

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 OMB-01 ACDA-07
EB-08 /109 W
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P R 191619Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 577
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USUN NEW YORK 2321
AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 4351

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, RH, CG, AO, NI, UK
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH GARBA ON NIGERIAN INITIATIVE

REF: LAGOS 4294

1. AFTER GIVING GARBA AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S LETTER CONCERNING US
STANCE ON CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN ILO (SEE SEPTTEL), I ASKED
HIM ABOUT NEXT STEPS IN NIGERIA'S MEDIATION EFFORT ON THE ANGOLAN/
ZAIRE PROBLEM. GARBA SAID THAT IN VIEW OF HIS ABSENCE FROM LAGOS
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UNTIL TWO DAYS AGO, COUPLED WITH OBASANJO'S ABSENCE FROM LAGOS
OVER THE WEEKEND, HE COULD NOT GIVE ME AN UP-TO-DATE READING. HE
WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SEE OBASANJO UNTIL LATER THIS AFTERNOON.
HE HIMSELF THOUGHT IT WAS DESIRABLE THAT HE GO PROMPTLY TO
LUANDA AND KINSHASA BUT COULD NOT PREDICT OBASANJO'S DECISION.

2. GARBA SAID NYERERE HAD TELEPHONED OBASANJO TO SUGGEST AN

EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE OAU. OBASANJO HAD TALKED HIM OUT OF IT, ARGUING THAT TO GET THE NECESSARY TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY WOULD TAKE WEEKS. NYERERE HAD THEN SUGGESTED THAT GARBA BE PRESENT IN LUANDA DURING THE MEETING OF THE FIVE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS THAT IS TO END TODAY. COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS HAD PREVENTED A TIMELY DECISION ON THIS SUGGESTION, BUT GARBA THOUGHT OBASANJO MIGHT DECIDE TO SEND HIM OFF TO LUANDA AS EARLY AS TOMORROW MORNING WHETHER OR NOT ANY FRONT LINE PRESIDENT EXCEPT NTETO WOULD STILL BE ON HAND.

3. I SAID I SAW SOME MERIT IN GARBA'S THUS REACTIVATING NIGERIA'S INITIATIVE AFTER HIS LONG ABSENCE FROM THE SCENE. I SAID IT MIGHT BE PARTICULARLY OPPORTUNE IN VIEW OF THE RELATIVE STABILITY THAT MOROCCAN AND OTHER ASSISTANCE APPEARED TO HAVE IMPARTED TO THE SHABA SITUATION. GARBA SAID HE AGREED AND WOULD SO RECOMMEND TO OBASANJO.

4. I ASKED GARBA HIS VIEWS REGARDING THE FEASIBILITY OF SOME KIND OF BORDER PATROL THAT WOULD PROTECT BOTH MOBUTU AND NETO FROM INCURSIONS FROM THE OTHER SIDE. HE REPLIED THE FMG THOUGHT THE PROPOSAL MIGHT BE ONE OF THE ELEMENTS IN A NEGOTIATED PACKAGE, BUT "NO ONE COULD SAFELY GO THERE NOW".

5. I ASKED WHETHER THE SOVIETS HAD EXPRESSED VIEWS ON THE ANGOLOAN/AIRE PROBLEM OR ON NIGERIA'S PROPOSED MEDIATION INITIATIVE. HE SAID THEY HAD NOT DONE SO DIRECTLY. BUT THE EAST EUROPEANS HAD CRITICIZED MOBUTU'S REQUEST FOR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND HAD CAUTIONED AGAINST ANY INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE CONFLICT. GARBA SAID THEIR ARGUMENTS WERE MOST "UNREALISTIC." HE HAD TOLD THEM THAT THE KATANGAN INCURSION WAS WITH THE CLEAR "CONNIVANCE"

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OF NETO. HE HAD STRESSED THAT THE OAU STOOD FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. THE KATANGESE THREATENED THE PRINCIPLE, WHEREAS THOSE COUNTRIES HELPING MOBUTU WERE ATTEMPTING TO SUSTAIN IT. HE SAID THE EAST EUROPEAN RESPONSE TO THIS LINE OF ARGUMENT WAS "UNIMPRESSIVE AND INADEQUATE."

6. I ASKED GARBA HOW HE COULD LEAVE TOWN IN VIEW OF THE IMPENDING ARRIVAL OF GEORGE THOMPSEN. HE SAID THE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE WAS NOT NEARLY SO IMPORTANT AS THE ANGOLAN/AIRE PROBLEM. SOMEONE ELSE COULD SEE THOMPSEN BUT IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHAT OBASANJO DECIDES." I SAID THAT IDI AMIN WAS NOT AS IMPORTANT EITHER. GARBA'S RESPONSE WAS TYPICALLY GARBAESQUE: "I TOLD THEM IN LONDON THAT IF THEY HAD ONLY IGNORED AMIN, HE WOULD PROBABLY NOT COME TO THE CONFERENCE. THEY DIDN'T LISTEN TO ME. NOW THEY HAVE MADE AN ISSUE OF IT AND AMIN WILL PROBABLY INSIST."

7. I GAVE GARBA A BRIEF RUNDOWN OF THE MILITARY/POLITICAL SITUATION IN SHABA. HE SEEMED RELATIVELY UNINFORMED AND SAID HE WAS MOST GRATEFUL SINCE THIS INFORMATION WOULD BE USEFUL FOR HIS CONVERSATION

WITH OBASANJO.
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